Recommendations of Science Task Force

782. SHRIMATI PREMA CARIAPPA: Will the Minister of HUMAN RESOURCE DEVELOPMENT be pleased to state:

(a) the recommendations of the Science Task Forece set up by his Ministry to check the falling number of science students;

(b) the various reasons for the fall in annual growth of science students at university level; and

(c) the measures Government propose to take to encourage the students to take up science subjects at the said level?

THE MINISTER OF STATE IN THE MINISTRY OF HUMAN RESOURCE DEVELOPMENT (SHRI MD. ALIASHRAF FATMI): (a) to (c) A Task Force was set up by the Government for strengthening basic science education and research within the existing university system. The recommendations *inter-alia* include to create 1000 positions of research scientists at various levels, five fold increase in the number of Ph. Ds from Indian universities and provisions of fellowships in basic sciences for pursuing Doctoral research etc. The report has been given to the University Grants Commission (UGC) for further action.

Children covered and amount spent on mid-day meal

†783. SHRI ABU ASIM AZMI: Will the Minister of HUMAN RESOURCE DEVELOPMENT be pleased to state:

(a) the number of children being provided mid-day meal and the amount being spent thereon;

(b) whether it is a fact that due to this mid-day, the children often suffer from vomiting, diarrhoea and other diseases;

(c) if so, the reasons therefor;

(d) whether Government are contemplating to pay cash to the children daily in lieu of mid day meal due to quality of the same; and

(e) if so, the details thereof and if not, the reasons therefor?

THE MINISTER OF STATE IN THE MINISTRY OF HUMAN RESOURCE DEVELOPMENT (SHRIMATI D. PURANDESWARI): (a) During 2005-06, based on the information furnished by State-Union

† Original notice of the question was received in Hindi.

Territories, about 12 crores children have been targeted for coverage under the Mid-Day Meal Scheme for which Rs. 3010.76 crores have been allocated.

(b) and (c) No. Only some stray instances are reported from time to time caused on account of lack of proper precaution with regard to hygiene and cleanliness.

(d) and (e) Cooked mid-day meal, prepared with due regard to hygiene, wholesomeness and nutrition has distinct advantages over cash incentive which is liable to be used for purposes other than nutrition.

Report on expenditure on education

784. SHRI PRAMOD MAHAJAN: Will the Minister of HUMAN RESOURCE DEVELOPMENT be pleased to state:

(a) whether the Committee appointed to raise public spending on education has given its report;

(b) if so, the details thereof; and

(c) the details of decisions taken by Government thereon?

THE MINISTER OF STATE IN THE MINISTRY OF HUMAN RESOURCE DEVELOPMENT (SHRI MD. ALIASHRAF FATMI): (a) to (c) Yes, Sir. Report has been received. It has quantified the funds requirement for education sector so as to reach the public expenditure on education to the level of 6% of GDP. The report of the Committee is under consideration of the Government.

Vision document of the technical institutions

785. SHRI PRAMOD MAHAJAN: Will the Minister of HUMAN RESOURCE DEVELOPMENT be pleased to state:

(a) whether seven technical institutions selected for the upgradation to the status of the existing NTs had submitted their "vision documents" around eight-months back;

(b) if so, the reaction of AICTE panel on these documents; and

(c) the decision taken by Government thereon?